YORL BY BERETEEN WATERS AMELIEDA HEELENA HEELENA REGERET EFFERRETE YALLAU SIFT

SHAKESPEARE AND SCRIPTURE. To the minds of many there may seem to be an incongruity in the conjunction of Shakespeare and Scripture. One is associated with all that it is worldly, frivolous, vain, even wicked; the other with all that is high, heawenly, and holy. Yet, with reverence be it spoken, they touch each other very nearly. Both deal with men and their actions, their pangs and passions, their sorrows and songs. Both set forth, not by mere precept, but by striking example, the solemn truth that the way of the transgressor is hard. Both show the greatness of goodness, the splendor of purity, the beauty of holiness. Nevertheless, the Bible is entitled to far the highest place. Deep as the great master of the drama goes into the secrets of the heart, keen as is his perception of the hidden springs of action, faithful as is his report of what he has seen and known, the oracles of God go deeper, see more plainly, report more faithfully. works are the result of consummate art; the book of books is the sum of nature. In Shakespeare's scheme the superhuman has a place, because he did not and could not overook or neglect that element of the mind which yearns towards the sphere of the invisible. The witches in Macbeth, "Ariel" in the Tempest, the hosts from fairy-land in A Midsummer Night's Dream, are proofs of this. It is needless to say that in the Scriptures the supernatural comes in not merely to accommodate a condition of the soul, but also to account for it. The Bible is not a work of imagination, shaping the possible out of the materials furnished by the actual; it is a history recounted by men who have beheld the seen and the unseen, and been enabled to perceive the union between the two. The productions of Shake-

It must not be forgotten, either, in considering the greatness of Shakespeare, that he had access to the magnificent poetry, the touching pathos, the clear individualization with which the Scriptures abound. That he was wise enough to avail himself of them would be a reasonable conclusion from his literary habits, were there no clear traces of the influence they exercised upon him. The man who took the plots of Boccaccio's novels, and created the characters necessary to work them out, in a manner perfectly natural, to their conclusion ; who laid under contribution the writers of his own time as well as those of antiquity, gathering materials of thought everywhere, but putting the stamp of his own genius upon the rough metal whengesoever derived-that man could not have neglected the wonderful volume which is unrivalled even as a literary performance. That he did not despise this treasure nor fail to use it is evidenced by phrases in his plays borrowed almost bodily from Holy Writ. It is still further evidenced in the delineation and development of certain characters which bear a marked similarity to Biblical personages. This is most strikingly shown in the tragedy of Macbeth, that Scottish king whose dark history presents so many points of resemblance to that of Saul, the unhappy monarch of Israel.

speare are the fruit of alofty mind; the books

the transfusion of the Spirit of God.

the Bible were born of intellect exalted by

Both these men are physically brave, with natures displaying certain traits of noticeness; both have stood face to face with death in clanging battle, and have not wavered; but both are, morally, cowards. They have no strength, no courage to oppose temptation; they yield themselves willing captives to every evil suggestion. Macbeth would be a king and at the prompting of ambition murders his kinsman, guest, and monarch, that he may reach the throne. Saul, being a king, presumptuously arrogates to himself the office of priest, and dares to amend the strict explicit command of God. At Gilgal he yielded to his impatience, and offered sacrifice before going to battle, instead of waiting for Samuel, whose right it was to present the offering before the Lord. When he smote the Amalekites, he took Agag their king alive, instead of putting him to the sword as Jehovah required. If ambition was Macbeth's spur to crime, presumption was the goad that drove Saul to great offenses against that Divine Ruler whose agent he was. He thought himself sufficient for any office, and esteemed himself wise beyond the wisdom of

the Almighty.

For this the prophet warned him that the kingdom should not continue to his house, but be given to another. So also Macbeth by prophecy held a "barren sceptre in his grasp, no son of his succeeding."

Both are under the influence of evil spirits for the weird sisters, or witches as they are commonly called, had power over M cheth, moving him to wicked purposes and atrocious acts; and from Saul "the Spirit of the Lord departed, and an evil spirit troubled him, so that his heart was full of dark intentions, and his hand was eager for bloody deeds." As all good and holy influences departed from the Hebrew king, leaving him under the control of evil, so in the play we behold Macbeth forsaken by all of good and left in awful bondage

"There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried, Murder / That they did wake each other; I stood and But they did say their prayers, and addressed

Again to sleep.

Lady M.—There are two lodged together.

Mac.—One cried, God bless us/ and Amen, the

other; As they had seen me with these hangman's hands
Listening their fear. I could not say, Amen,
When they did say, God biess us!
Lady M.—Consider it not so deeply.
Mac.—But wherefore could I not pronounce

Amen? I had most need of blessing, and Amen stuck in my throat,"

If ever there was a man forsaken of God, it

was that bloody-handed Thane. When David had returned from the slaughter of Goliath, triumphal processions met him with music and song. "Saul." said they, "has slain his thousands, and David his ten

thousands." The quick jealousy of the king took alarm, and whispered to him conbe have more but the kingdom?" From that day the monarch sought the warrior's life. When the witches pro-phesied that Macbeth should be king, they also foretold that Banquo, his companion and fellow-soldier, should be the father of kings. This was enough to fill the trembling soul of the usurper with distrust and fear of his former friend; and the hands that murdered the aged king could not rest until they had clutched the life of him whose children were to be royal. David escaped the rage of his lord, but Banquo fell before the jealousy of his

sometime comrade. To both these men there came the suffering which sin brings in its train; to Macbeth, remorse, the anguishing sense of insecurity in his high place so wickedly obtained, the hatred for those who fill his soul with fears, the madness which made him see the ghost of Banquo at the feast; to Saul, the terrors of a guilty conscience, the knowledge that his kingdom was to be taken from him and given to another, the fell that the colleguy between the living and the

desire for David's life, the melancholy insanity which often settles in the guilty mind. In deep distress, both wish to look into the future and descry what yet awaits them; both seek out witches, that they may obtain the infor-

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mation they desire. But the Scottish monarch sought those to whom alone he could go, those midnight hags whose prophecy had led him on to its fulfilment, and who, he judged, could tell him what was yet to be. Saul had possessed other means of knowing the future, and had employed them, but in vain. He had inquired of the Lo d, but the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. No details are given; we do not look in upon the workings of Saul's mind as we do in the case of Macbeth, yet from the hints supplied we can easily conceive his forlors and pitiable condition. Day after day he knocked at Heaven's gate and waited for such replies as had come in other days, but waited in vain. Day after day he cried great questions, as it were, into the ear of God, but received no answer save the echo of his own importunate words. Breathless anxiety deepened into unutterable arguish, hope deferred made the heart sick; the soul of the Lord's anointed was whelmed and sunk in woe as the awful truth grew plainer and plainer that the Lord had forsaken him. Of all men he had most need of Heaven's help and guidance; but Heaven to him was voiceless, he had lost his former hold upon it. He must turn, therefore, to those who, like himself, were the objects of God's anger and vengeance. Since good had left him, he must learn from evil. He bade his servants seek out a woman who had a familiar spirit, that he might inquire of her. They him of such an one who dwelt at Endor, a village about sixty miles north of Jerusalem.

So Macbeth, stained with Banquo's murder as well as Dunean's; haunted by his conscience, which evoked the slain chieftain from his bloody resting-place by the road-side, and seated him at a banquet in the palace; knowing that all men suspected and hated him; without human counsellors on whom he could rely, or human sympathizers whom he dared wholly trust; resolved in his hour of deep necessity to seek the witches with whom he had before trafficked in affairs of death.

"I am bent to know By the worst means, the worst," The next morning, when he meets them at he pit of Acheron, his language shows the desperate determination of one whose hope of Heaven is utterly gone, and who seeks aid and counsel from the powers of hell:-

"Though the treasure Of nature's germins tumble all together, Even till destruction sicken, answer me To what I ask you!"

The king of Israel disguised himself and put on other raiment, and, accompanied only by two of his servants, journeyed through the land until by night they came to the woman at Endor. Then he demanded that she should by her familiar spirit, bring up him whom he should name. The woman, perhaps suspecting to whom that tall form belonged, and naturally distrustful of any stranger, since Saul had put to death all who were known to have practised with familiar spirits, refused to em-ploy her art until by the most solemn oaths her art tintu by the most solemn oaths her safety had been assured. There is in this a remarkable coincidence with the relation enstained by the Scottish Thane to the weird sisters. The popular supposition is that Macbeth was tempted by them to his bloody deeds, but the text shows that they were rather tempted by him. In the opening of the tragedy they throw them-selves in his way; but it is because they recognize in him a secret influence which attracts them. Floating hither and thither in search of methods and instruments of wickedness, they are drawn towards the successful warrior as the lightning in a wandering cloud is drawn towards a rod of steel. A hidden affinity exists between these secret, and midnight hags and the seemingly frank and generous Thane of Glamis, Meeting him and Banquo on the blasted heath, they make no reply to the latter captain, "each her choppy finger laying upon her skinny lips;" but at Macbeth's command they respond, not in answering his query as to what they are, but in oracular proclamation of his present and

future titles:-"All hall, Macbeth, that shall be king here-after!"

At the words he starts like one whose secret thoughts have been unfolded, whose dim and half-formed purpose has been revealed, who hears plainly and loudly spoken what hitherto has been only faintly and vaguely whispered in the dark chambers of his heart. It is the chemical solution bringing into view the image lying unseen upon the sensitive plate of the photographer. Thans of Cawdor he had not thought to be, but the mention of kingly honor and estate was like the recurrence of some dim, almost forgotten dream. In moment messengers arrive from the king announcing to Macbeth that he is made Thane of Cawdor, the former owner of that title having been condemned to death for treason. It would seem reasonable and natural that, the first prediction having been thus fulfilled without step or action on his part, he might well have been content to wait for the coming of the greater honor foretold by the same authorities. But instead of that, he leaps at once to a bloody and dreadful conclusion. He will murder Duncan, and so succeed to his high office:-"My thought, whose murder yet is but fantas-

Only a man bad in grain, utterly selfish, and with an outraged conscience, could or would rush into such a cruel and bloody way in the absence of any suggestion to that effect. The witches made no mention of murder; they but prophesied that he should be king. The fulfilment of their first prediction -that he should be "Thane of Cawdor"-folowed upon the very heels of their foretelling. They judged rightly in supposing that the mere mention of kingly honors would be a talismanic word bringing into life and power the latent evil of his nature. Wicked themselves, they felt the subtle power of inherent and controlling wickedness in him, and sought him of kin with themselves. Unconsciously but truly he first allured and tempted these wicked ones, and was then deceived and misled by them.

So Saul tempts the witch of Endor. She would not use her art until by eaths and promises he had prevailed upon her. Then she proceeded to her task. We are not told

what charms, what forms of incantation she employed, yet such there doubtless were.

The bubbling caldron with its loathsome ingredients, the rhythmic chant with its unmeaning words, are not given in the Bible as they are in the tragedy. Nothing of the gro-tesque or ludicrous comes in to mar the solemn interest of the scene. At last, as in the play various apparitions rise, so from the dust of the earth in the witch's but rose up a dim and shadowy figure, evidently a visitor from another world. In all the play there is nothing more thrilling than that shriek of the woman of Endor as she perceived that her mummeries had really taken effect. In the scene that fol-

dead, with its dread prophecy of ruin to the king and his people, surpass in power and even in dramatic effect the eagerness of Macbeth, the scornful triumph of the witches, and the paltering in a double sense of those weird sisters, who spoke fair-sounding words hiding

a fatal meaning.

Nor is there in all the tragedy anything so pathetic as the view of Saul when the dead prophet has ended his prediction. That tall form fell like a ruined tower, the locks once anointed with sacred oil, grown grey and scant mingling with the dust of the poor hovel. Out of heart and hands the strength had gone, and fear filled them with trembling. And then comes in a touch of that nature which makes the whole world kin. The woman comes to him, and seeks to comfort him, entreating him to arise and eat. The prescribed and hunted witch, feared and shunned of men, save those who follow evil, nevertheless yearns with her woman's heart over the ornshed monarch, and strives to console him who has no other comforter. It is more touching than Lear, the old and outcast king, consorting with the fool and seeking shelter with the madman.

A point of similarity comes into view in the scene of these two histories. Hard pressed on every side, with his sons slain about him, wounded by the archers and sorely hurt, bidding his armor-bearer slay him, and, refused, falling upon his own sword, Saul perished upon Mount Gilboa. So Macbeth, orsaken of men and of God, mourning for his dead queen, flying from the conquering host, thought to die by his own weapon, and fell at last upon the heights of Dunsinane.

In this drama occurs also one of the pas sages in which Shakespeare borrows the language of Scripture, almost word for word. In the sacred history God sends a messenger to Eli with warning of woe upon his household. In the message these words are found:—"And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart," Macbeth's last interview with the witches he demands to know if Banquo's children shall ever reign as kings. They make reply:-

"Show his eyes and grieve his heart." For pathos and sublimity, for noble thoughts and lofty examples, for heroic deeds and holy words, for comfort and for wisdom, we may search Shakespeare with splendid results. But for all these and more, let us search the Scrip tures too, since therein holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost .-Northern Monthly.

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